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PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of selected country programmes

Note by the Administrator

SUMMARY

In chapters I-IV of the present note, the four Regional Bureaux of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) gave the salient features of their activities during 1990. The presentations illustrate how UNDP responds to national and regional needs, respecting sovereignty and the country-specific character of development challenges, while at the same time reflecting global concerns.

The reports of the Regional Bureaux give examples of innovative ways in which UNDP is helping countries to build and strengthen their national capacities to meet persistent, long-term development challenges. UNDP also has to be ready and able to answer requests to meet new challenges and problems as they emerge. This calls for quick responsiveness, imagination and flexibility: the note illustrates how UNDP has reacted to the new demands placed upon it, especially relating to displaced persons, HIV/AIDS and human rights.

The continuous nature of programming is clearly demonstrated in this note. In addition to the monitoring of ongoing projects, mid-term reviews of country programmes provide an opportunity for assessment of the continued relevance of established programmes as well as for revisions, if these are deemed necessary. Mid-term reviews have also been significant inputs to the programming of new cooperative efforts.

The Regional Bureaux report on programme resources and delivery. The catalytic and proactive roles of UNDP in mobilizing resources from other donors to complement and supplement its own efforts are clearly of increasing importance. Initiatives in aid coordination are noteworthy in this regard.

INTRODUCTION

1. The four Regional Bureaux of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) present below the salient features of their activities during 1990. It is interesting to note, on the one hand, the common concerns which cut across regions and, on the other hand, the diversity of other concerns which are particular to a specific region or country. The challenge to UNDP is to respond to both types of concern, the global and the local, with the relatively limited resources at its disposal. The presentations illustrate how UNDP has succeeded in responding to national and regional needs, respecting sovereignty and the country-specific character of problems, while at the same time reflecting global concerns.

2. Poverty alleviation remains a major goal in all regions, if not in all countries. During the 1980s, efforts to alleviate poverty in many countries have been occurring in the context of structural adjustment programmes and budgetary austerity, principally in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. UNDP has been involved in efforts to mitigate adverse social consequences of adjustment, for example, by redeployment and retraining and in supporting improved management of resources in the social sectors. Examples are found in Guyana, Jamaica and Tanzania. For the longer term, in response to a recommendation of African Ministers of Plan, work has begun on a regional project aimed at making development planning an effective instrument for growth and avoiding the pitfalls of the past. Initiatives on poverty alleviation included a number of projects in Colombia supporting the national strategy for poverty alleviation and credit programmes that call upon entrepreneurial initiatives at the local level in Central America. Another important event, co-sponsored by UNDP, was the World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand. This has already given impetus to programmes to reduce illiteracy.

3. Women are disproportionately represented among the poor and disadvantaged. This is now fully recognized and attention is focused on the integration of women in the development process, both as beneficiaries and contributors. The strategy is to mainstream concern for women in all programmes and projects. However, it is still found useful and necessary to heighten awareness of the issue through specific events. For example, a major regional conference in Cairo in May 1990, co-sponsored by UNDP, the League of Arab States and the Economic and Social Council for Western Asia (ESCWA) identified obstacles to Arab women's full integration in development. Similarly, a study in Bangladesh has resulted in pragmatic recommendations to improve the status of women. In Pakistan, a UNDP inter-agency review has also produced recommendations for the more effective integration of women in development activities.

4. Concern for the environment has emerged as a major preoccupation at global and local levels. A major initiative was the launching of Our Own Agenda, a publication resulting from the combined effort of the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) which was the first organized response of the developing countries in preparation of the world-wide United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil (1992). An Asian Ministerial Conference, co-sponsored by UNDP in October 1990, underlined the inextricable linkages between environment and human

development as well as the importance of grass-roots participation. UNDP also sponsored the Africa 2000 Network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), agencies and government officials aimed at improving environmental management. Particular attention has been paid to the urban environment, which faces constant pressure from natural and migratory population growth as well as changing consumption patterns. In the Arab States and European regions, the $15 million Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme was launched in 1990. UNDP is co-financing this significant initiative together with the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the European Community. In addition to these initiatives, all project proposals are reviewed for their environmental implications, if any.

5. The building of national capacity to organize and manage development is one of the principal goals supported by UNDP. While some projects are fully and explicitly aimed at management development, many other projects include the development of management capabilities as an essential component. Examples under way include the Africa Capacity-Building Initiative, in which UNDP is collaborating with the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB), as well as the Mass Training Support project in Peru.

6. It is clear from the illustrations outlined above that UNDP has been responding for some time to the global concerns of the Governing Council. If the transfer and adaptation of technology and Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) do not always find a place in the Bureaux reports; it is because they are instruments for transferring knowledge and know-how rather than development objectives in themselves. As such, they are built in at the project design stage, whenever applicable.

7. As mentioned at the outset, UNDP has to be ready and able to respond not only to persistent long-term challenges but also to new challenges and problems as they emerge. This calls for quick responsiveness, imagination and flexibility. These qualities are also reflected in the Regional Bureaux reports.

8. The human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV) and the disease known as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), initially viewed as a problem of the industrialized countries, parts of Africa and certain social groups, is now recognized as a threat of global dimensions affecting all social groups but in particular the younger, most economically productive elements. As such, if current predictions are realized, the development process will be adversely affected by the loss of young persons, often among the most educated and skilled. In Africa, UNDP is supporting programmes to combat HIV/AIDS: specific references are made to these efforts in Malawi, Uganda and Zaire. A regional effort to deal with the socio-economic consequences of the epidemic is to be launched shortly. In Asia, UNDP is working with Governments to enhance awareness of the potentially disastrous socio-economic consequences of HIV/AIDS.

9. Support to refugees and displaced persons has called for a sensitive and flexible response from UNDP. This has been forthcoming, as examples in Jordan, Sudan, Turkey and Central America demonstrate.

10. UNDP has long been working with Governments in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and Latin America to restructure economies from predominantly agricultural and often subsistence levels to mixed and modern economies, and to place them on a sustainable basis. Recently, the challenge posed by the switch from centrally planned to market economies, principally in Eastern Europe, has been taken up and a series of UNDP-supported interventions is under way to facilitate the process.

11. Another transitional situation relates to tne national liberation movements (NLMs) in southern Africa. The South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) programme has been largely phased out as the Namibia programme has been built up.

12. The unification of Democratic Yemen and Yemen in May 1990 called for a quick response to assess the development needs of the new Republic. This was achieved in July by a technical review mission.

13. In addition to the new areas of need briefly described above, a new area of focus is being introduced, albeit tentatively, into development, namely human rights. With the growing recognition of development as a human right (see General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986) as well as the assurance of human rights as an essential part of human development, requests for assistance in support of human rights are likely to increase. An innovative UNDP-supported project in Colombia and UNDP support to the Electoral Council in Haiti in particular indicate ways in which assistance may be utilized in this sensitive area.

14. Country programme formulation has begun and will be a major task for 1991. National technical cooperation assessments and programmes (NATCAPs) and other programme framework exercises are proving their worth for UNDP as well as for other programming purposes. Programming is a continuous process. While country programme documents are normally prepared every five years, the programme content is developed in detail on an ongoing basis and subjected to regular review. The formulation, monitoring and review of the implementation of programmes and projects constitutes the core of UNDP workload. Tripartite reviews and evaluations of projects ensure that goals and activities remain relevant, as well as feeding back lessons learned to future programming. The mid-term review exercise for country programmes represents another mechanism for ensuring that UNDP-supported programmes remain relevant and that they reflect changing concerns and needs. The findings of these reviews have been generally positive in this respect. Recommendations are being followed up and have been a significant input to the preparations for the next programming cycle. This subject is covered in document DP/1991/6.

15. Several references are made in the Bureaux reports to a greater concentration of UNDP resources on fewer, more priority-oriented objectives. This represents an initial step towards the application of a programme approach, to which UNDP is firmly committed. Combined with the steadily increasing national execution of external assistance, it will ensure that UNDP programmes are more firmly rooted in priority national development goals in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989. Another trend is the use of UNDP resources to initiate programme activities and actively seek external sources of funding to carry them out. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, this has led to a trebling of resources available to UNDP.

16. The Regional Bureaux report a steady increase in the percentage of UNDP resources under national execution. This trend is encouraged and facilitated by training courses for national managers and other personnel. At the same time, the specialized agencies continue to be closely associated with all stages of the programme and project cycles.

17. Finally, it is ever more apparent that the needs for UNDP assistance far outstrip the available UNDP resources. However, while substantially increased resources are still sought, it is also evident from the Regional Bureaux reports that innovative, well-designed programmes, projects and events attract co-financing and co-sponsorship. Development is complex and multi-faceted: it combines political, social, economic, cultural and natural elements. There is no single formula for success although there are common concerns. The four brief reports which follow describe how UNDP is contributing to development as an ongoing, long-term process as well as responding to the new challenges and insights emerging from this process as it unfolds.

I. AFRICAN REGION

A. Socio-economic context

18. The economic performance of the Africa region slowed in 1990, with the rate of growth of gross domestic product (GDP) falling from its 1989 level of 3.25 per cent to an estimated 2.75 per cent in 1990, thus reversing the modest upward trend experienced in the late 1980s. With population growth averaging about 3 per cent, living standards fell in many parts of the region. The effects of this decline were not spread evenly throughout the region; it was more clearly felt by those countries of sub-Saharan Africa which suffered from the recent fall in prices for non-fuel primary commodities, drought and internal and external conflicts. However, in Botswana, Ghana and Mauritius, for example, positive rates of growth were registered in 1990. Besides the oil price increases during the second half of the year, the terms of trade of major commodities exported by African countries such as cocoa and coffee continued to deteriorate. Total debt for the region rose from $208.5 billion in 1989 to $225.1 billion in 1990. Because of these problems, some 32 of the 43 countries in the region are actively engaged in policy, economic and institutional reform.

B. Programme overview

19. A number of initiatives were launched in 1990 which mirror the priorities established with the six programming themes mandated by Governing Council decision 90/34 of June 1990. For poverty eradication and grass-roots participation these include: finalizing the first UNDP-led social dimensions of adjustment project in Tanzania and advancing the process in Niger; the Popular Participation Meeting in Arusha, which was well attended by government, agency, and NGO officials on ways to improve collaboration; and critical food supply issues were addressed through the UNDP/World Bank/AfDB/Carter Center initiative, which is now under way in eight countries and seeks to help develop long-term strategies for food security, focused

on reaching the most vulnerable groups and for mobilizing resources for this end. The environment and natural resource management theme was reflected in country-level environmental impact assessments prepared in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Africa 2000 Network meeting of NGOs, agencies and government officials to improve programming and coordination in collaborative programmes in the environment and environmental management. In addition to the Management Development Programme (MDP) activities in the Africa region, preparations were made for the collaborative Africa Capacity-Building Initiative with the World Bank and AfDB and programming initiatives for national long-term perspective studies were begun. For TCDC and women in development, programming and project support activities have continued to be implemented, including umbrella projects for TCDC and country programme reviews for gender sensitivity of selected projects.

20. Highlights of the programme in 1990 included: (a) a new regional project entitled Support to Development Planning in Africa (RAF/89/054) was launched in response to the recommendation made at the April 1989 meeting of African Ministers of Plan that a common methodological vision be developed among African planners on ways and means to make development planning an effective instrument for growth; (b) 26 countries in the region are now in various stages of implementing NATCAPs, of which an estimated 11 are planned to provide the centrepiece to the forthcoming country programming exercises; (c) UNDP-organized round-table meetings were successfully undertaken in Chad and the Gambia and follow-up sectoral meetings held in some eight countries; and (d) management development programmes continued to be actively implemented in the region.

21. Twenty country programmes and the programme for the NLMs were subject to mid-term reviews in 1990, thus completing the cycle of mid-term reviews for the region. The following represent the major findings and themes common to most reviews: a high degree of government leadership and agency involvement in the process, and in some cases donor involvement as well; increasing priority is being accorded to strengthening national policy-making, planning and development management capabilities; NATCAP programmes are active in over 50 per cent of the countries and continue to play an increasingly important role in the aid coordination and country programming processes; the social dimension of adjustment continues to receive increasing priority and a consensus seems to be emerging that it should be accorded even higher priority in the next programming cycle; increasing attention is being directed to national capacity-building, institutional management and long-term sustainability; a number of programmes have succeeded in mainstreaming various policy initiatives into their regular programme of activities, including NGO/grass-roots support, environmental management, women in development, private sector, and TCDC; there has been a trend to use increasingly the national execution modality and, where possible, to encourage the recruitment of local consultants; and, lastly, increasing pressure is being placed on maintaining programme and project momentum to ensure high commitment levels and in anticipation of the additional resource allocation that will result from Governing Council decision 90/34.

22. A representative sample of six country programmes in the Africa region are assessed below; they are those for Zaire, Uganda, Niger, Malawi, the regional programme and the NLM programme. Last year, 19 country programmes were reported on in document DP/1990/39. Findings and recommendations of the mid-term reviews are being followed up and are providing useful inputs into the country programming process. Submissions have been or are being made to the Governing Council for all programmes over $10 million. Below are the main features of the representative reviews from 1990.

Zaire

23. The mid-term review of the fourth country programme for Zaire was held in 1990 and resulted in focusing the programme on fewer activities in view of the relatively limited UNDP resources in comparison with existing needs. The meeting reaffirmed the important and increasingly catalytic nature of UNDP assistance and recognized the impact of the UNDP programme on the development of human resources and the strengthening of cooperation amongst donors.

24. The four major objectives of the programme are (a) strengthening of economic management; (b) institutional strengthening geared towards increased agricultural and industrial production; (c) improvement of the social environment, especially through human resources development; and (d) participation in the rehabilitation of the transport and communications system. The mid-term review has confirmed the relevance of the programme to the prevailing situation in the country and its conformity with the Government's priorities. In the next programme, increased attention will be given to AIDS and the environment.

Uganda

25. The mid-term review of the third country programme took place in November 1990. The programme for Uganda reflects two objectives: restoration and enhancement of productive capacities in key sectors of the economy, especially agriculture and manufacturing, through the strengthening of institutions, structures and human resources; and the provision of integrated support to agriculture and rural development.

26. The programme was assessed as still being relevant to the needs and objectives of the country today. Achievements of the programme, particularly in the field of administrative reform and incentive schemes were acknowledged; it was agreed that this area of assistance be further pursued. Aid coordination was also highlighted; this includes the new role of UNDP in the coordination of the recently launched multidonor programme to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Uganda and special assistance to the newly established National Commission on AIDS.

Malawi

27. The overall strategy of the country programme is to assist the Government to achieve national self-reliance through human resource development and institution-building. The mid-term review of the fourth country programme, held in 1989, confirmed that the country programme priorities were consistent with those of

the Government. The review recommended: (a) the continued implementation of institution-building projects; (b) increased national execution; further integration of the UNDP projects with the Public Sector Investment Programme; and (c) increased use of United Nations volunteers. The review also recommended that the ongoing NATCAP exercise be given priority. One development which had emerged since the country programme was approved was the burden on the country caused by the influx of refugees from Mozambique. The review agreed to use the indicative planning figure (IPF) resources as seed money only to attract additional resources in support of refugees.

28. In support of enhanced Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) collaboration, the meeting jointly reviewed the UNFPA programme and also recommended that the next UNDP and UNFPA programmes be submitted at the same session of the Governing Council. The review recommended further collaboration in areas of urgent concern, for example, food security and poverty alleviation.

Niger

29. The fourth country programme for Niger (1987-1991) was reviewed in November 1990. The programme has four main objectives: increased rural productivity; the reorientation and promotion of public and private enterprises; the strengthening of economic management; and improvement of living conditions of the population. The meeting agreed that these objectives were still valid and in conformity with the priority technical cooperation needs in the country.

30. The principal conclusions of the mid-term review were: (a) a relatively low level of programme delivery was achieved, although the direction of implementation remained in conformity with the four main objectives of the country programme; (b) there is a need to strengthen sectoral programming and to improve the coordination between projects within a sector; (c) project formulation and implementation has experienced delays, particularly in the sector of agricultural/rural development and it was agreed that an action plan to improve the situation be established; (d) difficulties in programme implementation were experienced as the result of a lack of counterpart staff or delays in their nomination, as well as delays in the recruitment by agencies of expert staff; and (e) in several cases no arrangements have been made to guarantee the sustainability of project results.

31. Therefore, in order to improve efficiency and implementation, the following recommendations were made: (a) organization of joint inter-agency missions when necessary and formalization of a sectoral approach in advance of agency intervention; (b) simplification of procedures to accelerate project implementation; (c) nomination of government counterpart at an early stage; (d) for the agencies, improvement of expert recruitment; (e) strengthening of the coordinating role of the Ministry of Planning; (f) adequate budgeting by the Government to assure continuity and sustainability of project achievements.

National liberation movements

32. The mid-term review of the National Liberation Movements (NLM), the assistance programme for the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), was conducted in February 1990. It was agreed that assistance in the educational sector should be revised upwards since more students would be joining their training facilities in the United Republic of Tanzania.

33. The transfer of development assistance for SWAPO to technical assistance for Namibia was started early in 1989. Subsequently, as of April 1989, in the light of the forthcoming independence of Namibia, and, in accordance with the request of the Governing Council, the NLM programme of assistance to SWAPO was scaled down. New assistance to SWAPO was no longer approved and the implementation of all other projects for SWAPO was brought to a halt. Only two projects were continued: one to provide education for children in Nyango, Zambia, and the other to provide health services to those children and their teachers.

34. Because of the transfer to Namibia of the external SWAPO component and the transitional period in the country leading to full independence, it was not possible to include the SWAPO element in the NLM review. It was, however, included in the internal UNDP review of UNDP assistance to the NLM, which was prepared in May 1990.

35. At its thirty-seventh session (1990), the Governing Council approved an entitlement of $15.67 million, which consolidates the funds that were available for SWAPO in the IPF for NLMs, the unutilized balance of the old IPF for Namibia and the independence bonus. These funds will be programmed during the balance of the fourth cycle.

Regional programme performance

36. The mid-term review of the fourth regional programme for Africa was conducted in December 1989. The findings are described in the report of the Administrator (DP/1990/38/Add.9), submitted to the Governing Council at its thirty-seventh session. The review made a number of recommendations for the remainder of the fourth programming cycle which are now being implemented.

37. A key objective for the remainder of the fourth programming cycle is to ensure very close monitoring of all projects. In 1990, a rigorous schedule of 9 steering committee meetings and 23 tripartite reviews, and 30 in-depth evaluations were undertaken to ensure that the objectives of the fourth regional programme are fulfilled and that sufficient facts on the impact of the programme are available at the end of the cycle.

38. On the recommendations of the mid-term review, a separate thematic evaluation of the regional programme assistance to intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) was carried out from September to November 1990. A comprehensive evaluation of the fourth regional programme as a whole was also organized in November-December 1990 and the results and recommendations are available and provide an important input into the preparations of the fifth cycle regional programme.

39. Following the recommendations of the mid-term review, the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) has intensified its effort to involve more actively the Resident Representatives, United Nations executing agencies and IGOs in the preparations for the fifth regional programme. In this regard, RBA has shared with all field offices in the region the mid-term report, which contains specific areas of involvement for the Resident Representatives, including identifying linkages between the regional programme and national projects.

C. Programme management

40. The placement and appointment of three Regional Programme Officers in Abidjan, Libreville and Lusaka also took place in 1990, as approved by the Governing Council in response to document DP/88/65 concerning the UNDP response to emergency, medium-term and long-term development requirements in Africa. At the field level, Regional Programme Officers maintain close links with Governments and Resident Representatives, AfDB and subregional IGOs such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Southern African Development and Coordinating Conference, the Economic Community of Central African States.

41. Country programming exercises for the fifth programming cycle are under way in almost all countries in the region and in keeping with the spirit of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which calls for the harmonization of procedures among United Nations agencies, and Governing Council decision 90/34, which reaffirms national plans as the framework for all programming exercises, active negotiations are being undertaken to synchronize the United Nations agency country programmes with the national plans of the host Government. Negotiations both at the field level and at headquarters indicate that the majority of country programmes amongst the JCGP partners can and will be realigned with national programmes during the next programming cycle, and where the present configuration of programming cycles is too disparate to realign during the fifth cycle, preparations are under way to ensure that the following cycle will be synchronized with the Government's national plan and programmes of JCGP agencies.

42. Programme resource allocation by executing agency showed an increase in national execution from 3.1 per cent during the previous cycle to 7.1 per cent in the fourth cycle. The main executing agencies remain as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (25.2 per cent), the United Nations Department for Technical Co-operation for Development (UNDTCD) (15.5 per cent), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (9.4 per cent), World Bank (5.8 per cent), the Office for Project Services (OPS) (8.5 per cent), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) (7.1 per cent), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (3.1 per cent), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (1.9 per cent) and others (16.3 per cent). Concerted pressure on programme delivery resulted in a 9.7 per cent increase in 1990 over delivery in the previous year.

43. Issues of programme management are also dealt with in greater depth in the following documents to be submitted to the Governing Council during 1991: The role

of the United Nations Development Programme in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (DP/1991/16); the Transportation and Communication Decade for Africa (DP/1991/18), and the least developed countries (DP/1991/19).

II. ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

A. Socio-economic context

44. The impressive economic performance of the region characterized by a high growth of 9 per cent in 1988 slowed to a moderate 6 per cent in 1989. This downturn, which persisted in 1990, was largely due to declining exports stemming from dampened world economic growth, inadequate industrial capacities, and rising inflation.

45. There were, however, wide variations in growth patterns among the developing economies in the region. Countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) maintained their robust growth with increase of intraregional trade and large inflows of direct investment, principally from Japan. The least developed and Pacific Island countries, however, continued to fare poorly, as did South Asian countries where, despite favourable weather conditions in 1989, the general trend has been towards a deceleration of the growth rate.

46. The Persian Gulf crisis adversely affected several economies in the region. Inflationary trends which, in early 1990, hit double digit levels in some countries have been exacerbated, particularly for the oil-importing countries of South Asia. The escalation in energy import costs, consequent inflation, loss of remittances from migrant workers, the loss of export markets in Kuwait and Iraq and the problems of re-deploying returning migrant labour are undermining the region's record of strong economic performance.

B. Programme overview

47. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) and the Resident Representatives are consulting closely with Governments on the preparations of new country programmes. Three country programmes are scheduled for submission to the Governing Council in June 1991 and the remainder for 1992. They will reflect the Governing Council decisions adopted at the thirty-seventh session (1990) pertaining to the programme approach, national execution, human development and the six areas of focus for building and strengthening national capacity. The country programmes will also address current and emerging concerns, including uncontrolled urban growth, AIDS, and the economic implications of the Persian Gulf crisis.

48. Several special initiatives are being taken to promote human development in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Viet Nam. In Bangladesh, UNDP will assist the Government in preparing a long-term human development programme. The Government of Indonesia, which has set up a National Steering Committee on Human Development, will benefit from UNDP assistance in developing a country strategy.

Likewise, in Pakistan, which has also established a working committee, the mission will review needs in the education and health sectors, and issues relating to equitable growth. Support is being extended to an economic symposium for India in 1991 that will focus on human development, poverty alleviation and economic growth. In Viet Nam, the mission will assess the basic needs of a particularly poor province from where most of the so-called boat people originate.

49. Country programmes in the region continue to emphasize programmes and projects that promote environmental sustainability and sound development. Accordingly, all Resident Representatives participated in the Asian Ministerial Conference on the Environment. Held in Bangkok in October 1990, the Conference endorsed the key role of UNDP as coordinator and implementor of environmental follow-up activity in the region. It underlined the inextricable linkages between environment and human development and the importance of grass-roots participation in all stages of the development process. Several new UNDP initiatives, including Asia 2000, which will specifically assist NGOs to deal effectively with urban environmental problems, were endorsed by the Conference. Among them, assistance to Governments on the preparation of national strategies for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992.

50. A variety of initiatives have also been taken to address issues relating to women. Support to a study conducted in Bangladesh led to a stimulating and provocative report with pragmatic recommendations for effectively addressing women's concerns. In India, UNDP and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) are jointly funding a position of women-in-development (WID) adviser, filled by a national, whose task is to ensure that gender issues are reflected in all projects and provide guidelines to experts and government staff. A UNDP/inter-agency review of the impact of United Nations programmes on women in Pakistan resulted in an analytical report with sound practical recommendations for implementation by the Government.

51. HIV/AIDS, now spreading at an alarming rate in some countries in the region, commands urgent priority attention. In 1991, all UNDP field offices will conduct national workshops for government agencies, NGOs, and other community members to enhance their awareness of the disastrous socio-economic consequences of AIDS. The workshops will also provide inputs for a major regional conference on AIDS to be held at the end of 1991. Resident Representatives are consulting with Governments on the formulation of immediate, medium- and long-term plans to address AIDS-related problems and the role that UNDP can play in their implementation.

52. Follow-up actions are being taken on the workshops/seminars on private sector development and management development conducted throughout the region in 1989. In Viet Nam, UNDP, with the close involvement of the World Bank Economic Development Institute, is providing training in economic management to senior economic policy makers in Viet Nam. UNDP has also undertaken a comprehensive economic study of Viet Nam in preparation for a future donor meeting. Likewise in Laos, UNDP is supporting the Government's efforts towards privatization of public enterprises, economic and business legislation, foreign investment promotion, etc. Additionally, UNDP is also assisting with two key institution development projects, namely, capital investment planning and management development.

53. There are continuing efforts to maximize the benefits of the intercountry programme, which is now being directed to the areas of human development, the management of sustainable environment and natural resources, and economic reform. In preparation for the fifth programming cycle, a regional symposium on cooperation in Asia and the Pacific was held in Honolulu, in association with the East-West Center. The symposium identified the special needs of subregions and recommended appropriate programme responses by RBAP.

54. UNDP field offices in the region play an active role in both formal and informal aid coordination. In addition, UNDP also continues to organize round-table meetings not only for least developed countries (LDCs) in the region but also non-LDCs which do not have other mechanisms for donor consultation. In May 1990, round-table meetings were convened in Geneva for Western Samoa, the Cook Islands and Fiji. Preparations are currently under way for convening round-table meetings for six countries in 1991.

55. Guided by the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference for the Least Developed Countries, convened by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Paris in September 1990, round-table meetings will give more focus to the prioritization of external assistance requirements. Greater attention will also be paid to needs assessments. This will help enhance the role of the round-table document as a useful framework for the programming of all donor assistance. UNDP country programming and round-table processes are also being synchronized to enhance linkages and facilitate management actions.

C. Programme management

56. Total IPF resources available to the Asia and the Pacific region for the fourth programming cycle are $1.5 billion. The Special Measures Fund for the Least Developed Countries (SMF/LDCs), Special Programme Resources (SPR) and cost-sharing contributions by recipient countries and third parties collectively provide another $132 million. Total resources available for programming thus amount to $1.6 billion, of which about 70 per cent will already have been expended by the end of 1990.

57. There are about 2,000 country and regional projects ongoing in the region. Total expenditure from the IPF in 1990 on these projects, estimated at $270 million, represents a 9 per cent increase over the 1989 delivery of $247 million. Expenditures from SMF/LDCs and SPR funds total $13 million as compared to $9.7 million in 1989. With respect to cost-sharing contributions, expenditure rose progressively from $8.4 million in 1987 to an estimated $20 million in 1990. RBAP is continuing its efforts to boost cost-sharing contributions in the fifth programming cycle.

58. The sectoral distribution of expenditure is marked by increasing emphasis on the industrial sector. In 1990, this reached 20 per cent, surpassing the 18 per cent for agriculture and forestry. Natural resources and development planning accounted for 15 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. The ongoing shift in programme emphasis to human development will result in a corresponding rise in expenditures on the social sectors, which currently account for 11 per cent.

59. Efforts to promote national execution are manifested by the rise in expenditures on nationally executed projects. Amounting to $26 million in 1990, as compared to $19 million in 1987, these are projected to increase sharply in future years. A number of measures are under way to boost national execution. Appropriate training is being given to government staff in a number of countries, including Indonesia, Myanmar, China and the Pacific island countries. Field offices are conducting capacity studies in their respective countries to identify technical and management needs for national execution. Some countries, such as Thailand, have developed a roster of national experts in various fields and a list of national institutions to undertake national programmes as well as to promote TCDC.

60. All new projects are critically appraised to maximize impact and ensure sustainability. In this regard, full attention is given to the six areas of focus for the fifth programming cycle. Guided by the programme approach, several field offices are developing appropriate broad-based interventions in priority areas that will ensure most effective impact from scarce IPF resources for the attainment of the development objectives of Governments.

61. Mid-term reviews of eight country programmes were conducted during 1990. These included those for Pakistan and the Maldives, which were presented separately to the Governing Council at its special session in February 1991. The remaining six reviews are for Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Malaysia, Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands. The size of the country programmes reviewed ranged from an IPF of $83 million for Pakistan to $4 million for Tuvalu. In conducting these reviews, consideration was given to the recommendations of the evaluation of the mid-term review process. The reviews provided a useful basis for discussing the direction and thrust of the next country programmes.

62. Governmental participation in the mid-term reviews was generally at a senior level and included representatives from major line ministries and departments. United Nations agencies were consulted or participated in the review exercises to the fullest possible extent. Agency inputs, however, focused more on operational rather than on substantive macro issues in their respective sectors.

63. UNDP field offices prepared the necessary documentation for the reviews. These included sectoral reviews and comprehensive sectoral working papers prepared internally. In a few cases, such as Papua New Guinea and Malaysia, consultants assisted field offices in preparing for the review.

64. The reviews revealed that the country programmes generally remained relevant to the government's overall priorities. Significant changes in the relative emphasis of sectoral priorities were, however, noted in the country programme for Fiji, resulting from the change in the country's overall economic situation. In line with new government priorities, allocations for public sector policy, planning and financial management were increased from the original target of 35 per cent to 55 per cent while that of agriculture fell from 46 per cent to 30 per cent.

65. The programmes reviewed also adhered to the overall development objectives identified in the country programme documents. However, a substantial number of

new projects were added to some country programmes, particularly those for Pakistan, Malaysia and Thailand. These were, in general, small-scale projects and accounted for a relatively small share of the IPF. In the case of Malaysia, a large number of projects originally identified in the country programme were also dropped. This change in project priorities largely resulted from identification of alternative source of funding for the projects and the emergence of new priorities.

66. The country programme objectives were, in most cases, broadly defined. Human resources development and strengthening of planning and plan implementation capabilities were priority objectives of all the programmes reviewed. However, in terms of resource allocation, the emphasis varied, with Malaysia devoting almost 70 per cent of its resources to these two objectives while in case of Pakistan, human resources development received only 17 per cent. The Pakistan programme was characterized by its emphasis on pre-investment and direct investment support in line with the Government's overall development objectives and plans.

67. The country programmes reviewed varied substantially in terms of their focus and coherence. The Malaysia programme focused on three broad cross-sectoral areas while the Thailand programme covered all the major sectors. All the programmes reviewed had a large number of projects in relation to the UNDP resources available. While recognizing that a well conceived and implemented project could have real impact regardless of its size, most of the reviews recognized the need for concentrating on fewer, larger-scale projects so as to enhance programme focus and improve management.

68. Most of the country programmes reviewed were found to have already committed a large share of the IPF resources by the time of the mid-term review. In several cases, commitments exceeded available resources and borrowings from the next cycle were considered necessary. This was particularly true of small programmes such as those for the Maldives, Kiribati and Tuvalu, reflecting a general insufficiency of resources against requirements. For these countries, allocations under SMF/LDC as well as from the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) were important additional funds, representing almost a 100 per cent increase over the country IPF allocation. The Governing Council decision to allocate 55 per cent of resources to LDCs in the fifth programming cycle should alleviate the current resource constraints of LDCs. In the case of Papua New Guinea, with a country IPF of $12.7 million, cost-sharing contributions from the Government and donors added about 50 per cent to the value of the country IPF while in the case of Malaysia, Government cost-sharing contribution accounted for an additional 70 per cent over the IPF.

69. The mid-term reviews revealed that most of the areas of focus specified in Governing Council decision 90/34 are already being addressed to varying degrees at the country level. Issues relating to priority thematic areas such as management development, environmental protection, women-in-development and private sector development are being addressed either through ongoing programmes or through special initiatives. Management development is a priority focus area for the Pacific island countries while the Government of Maldives has given priority to environmental protection and has formulated an environmental action plan. In Pakistan, the Government has prepared a national conservation strategy involving

environmental protection, women-in-development and the private sector. In several cases, such as the Maldives, Papua New Guinea and Pakistan, the mid-term reviews resulted in specific agreement to give more focus to the priority thematic areas during the remainder of the country programmes.

70. Several common implementation problems were identified by the mid-term reviews. These included lengthy project formulation and start up, delays in the recruitment of experts, and inadequate counterpart staff and funding. In the cases of Pakistan and Thailand, complicated Government procedure was identified as the main factor affecting project formulation. Unavailability of suitably qualified counterpart Government staff and inadequate conterpart funding were problems particulary affecting the programmes in LDCs. In the case of Kiribati and Thailand, which have a substantial number of nationally executed projects, administrative problems associated with national execution were also discussed. Recommendations made to deal with items included concentrating the programme into fewer, larger projects, institutional measures to improve Government project approval process, and the streamlining of some administrative and management procedures to facilitate project implementation. Resident Representatives are working closely with Governments to give effect to these recommendations.

III. ARAB STATES AND EUROPE REGION

A. Socio-economic context

71. Beginning in August 1990, the Persian Gulf crisis spread severe economic and social hardship to neighbouring countries, particularly Jordan, Egypt, Yemen and Turkey, which lost revenues from trade, tourism and remittances and faced the problem of reintegrating hundreds of thousands of returnees. In Jordan alone, the loss to the country was estimated at 40 per cent of GDP. There was optimism in Yemen following the unification of Democratic Yemen and Yemen, but serious worries about the impact of a million returnees on a fragile economy. Sudan faced impending famine, while in Somalia the security situation continued to cause grave concern. These events affected regional cooperation and programme implementation. A more positive picture emerged in Lebanon, where Greater Beirut was brought under the authority of the central Government and hopes were pinned on a campaign of reconstruction and development following 15 years of civil strife. Also positive were the moves in North Africa to reinforce integration within the Arab Maghreb Union through an economic common market.

72. In Eastern Europe, assistance focused on small-scale but key interventions in support for transition from centrally planned to market economies. The Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe (RBASE) strengthened its capacity to respond by merging existing posts into a Division for Europe and appointing a Division Chief. A liaison office was opened in Poland and preparations were made for an office in Albania.

B. Programme overview

73. During 1990, the Arab and European programmes supported major new initiatives on key themes, including the environment, women in development and the private sector. Rapid action was needed to respond to new circumstances, particularly in Europe, in unified Yemen, and in emergency situations.

1. Programme themes

The environment

74. Effective integration of environmental concerns into country and regional programmes was the most important Bureau objective for 1990. Given that 35 and 40 per cent of regional projects for Arab States and Europe respectively now directly address environmental concerns, this was an area of substantial achievement. Bureau activities ranged from small national to major regional projects. For example, a $295,000 project executed by the Tunisian National Environment Protection Agency included a seminar to sensitize industrialists, a campaign to keep Tunisian beaches clean, a drawing contest for children, and a round-table meeting to mobilize funds for environmental protection.

75. The $15 million Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme, launched in 1990, is jointly financed by both the Bureau's Arab and European regional programmes, in conjunction with the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the European Community. It will assist countries to strengthen national capacity in environmental management, prepare innovative projects, and develop policy in the priority areas of water resources and waste water management, marine oil pollution, solid and hazardous waste, and coastal zone management.

76. The Bureau also took the initiative to propose a Centre for the Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe to serve as an independent mechanism to promote the integration of environmental concerns into development efforts. Drawing on capacities and technologies from existing institutions throughout the Arab States and Europe, the Centre would initially concentrate on two areas of critical importance to the region: management of freshwater resources and land resource development. It was unanimously endorsed as the number one priority for the Arab regional programme during the October mid-term review.

Women in development

77. The Bureau organized a major regional conference in Cairo in May - attended by over 150 experts and representatives of governments, agencies and NGOs - to identify the obstacles to Arab women's full integration in development. The UNDP conference was co-sponsored by the League of Arab States and ESCWA, and the lively debates on agriculture, industry, the private sector and other areas received wide media coverage, thereby introducing a pragmatic element in the debate on women's roles. The Bureau is now formulating an operational programme to address some of the areas of concern highlighted by the conference. The Cairo conference was followed by a workshop for field-office women-in-development focal points. In November, a successful gender workshop was held in Morocco, characterized by

high-level government representation. In the European region, preparations were under way for a 1991 seminar sponsored jointly by the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP and other United Nations agencies on the impact of reform on women in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Sustainable development

78. The Bureau contributed to the debate on sustainable development in the region by hosting a high-level seminar in March 1990, co-sponsored by the Arab Thought Forum and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. Discussing papers on economic and socio-cultural issues, informatics, energy, environment, women and NGOs, participants agreed sustainable development required a multi-faceted approach. Ideas generated will be used to integrate human development concepts into programming, and in tackling poverty alleviation. The seminar recommended that UNDP assist in seeking new ways to moblize investment resources in the Arab region, particularly national domestic and expatriate savings. UNDP convened an Expert Group meeting in September 1990, and consultations are under way with Egypt and Tunisia to assess the climate for country funds along the lines of those established by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) during the 1980s.

Private sector

79. Eastern Europe was a major focus of activity. UNDP helped sponsor a national privatization conference in Poland in October. In November, a major regional privatization conference was held in Yugoslavia, which UNDP co-sponsored with the World Bank/Economic Development Institute and the International Centre for Public Enterprises. This brought together leaders of privatization agencies from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia; the Soviet Union was also represented. Euro-Arab linkages in the private sector continued with a workshop enabling government and private sector representatives to share experiences.

2. Areas of change and development

Response to unification of Democratic Yemen and Yemen

80. The Bureau responded quickly to the declaration of a unified Republic of Yemen on 22 May 1990. A high-level mission in June headed by the Regional Director met with the Prime Minister and senior government officials on the implications for development priorities. A UNDP-wide, Bureau-led technical review mission in July assessed the development needs of the new Republic and designed the unified UNDP field office required to address these needs. A comprehensive functional analysis and capacity-building exercise - the first of its kind for UNDP field offices - was completed, and covered all areas of UNDP activity: programme, management, personnel, and administration. This resulted in a significantly upgraded field office capability and a substantially lower administrative cost/delivery ratio.

Support for transition in Central and Eastern Europe

81. UNDP cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has traditionally concentrated on the development of skills and capacities in science and technology. Activities at country and regional levels have been highly successful in terms of institution-building and strengthening linkages among countries of the region and beyond. The active participation of Governments ensured support and cost-effectiveness in the use of limited resources. However, it was difficult to evaluate the overall economic and social impact of these activities.

82. The major political and societal changes of 1989 and 1990 have led to a new kind of dialogue between UNDP and largely new national partners, covering new areas. During visits by the Administrator and the Regional Director to Eastern Europe in Spring 1990, new themes for UNDP cooperation in each country were agreed upon. This was followed by a series of small-scale rapid interventions in key areas: consultancies in public sector reform and privatization; management and entrepreneurship training; and support measures for economic transition. Large-scale projects are now being formulated in privatization, public sector reform, management training, environmental protection, telecommunications, and other areas. The Bureau's funding strategy continued to concentrate on identifying the comparative advantage of UNDP in support of the transition process and on mobilizing resources from the additional allocations for these countries made by many bilateral and multilateral partners.

Development in emergency situations

83. Many countries of the region faced emergency situations caused by drought, famine and conflict. As one of the front-line countries in the Persian Gulf crisis, Jordan had to cope with large-scale problems caused by the 700,000 people who transited through the country on their way home from Iraq and Kuwait. The Government was assisted by the United Nations system in efforts coordinated by the UNDP Resident Representative/United Nations Resident Coordinator. The Bureau will be supporting national and regional projects targeted at the economic integration of returnees. Another example of dealing with emergency challenges was the UNDP Emergency Programme to Combat Famine in the Sudan in 1991, which was developed in response to signs of approaching acute shortages in food, fodder and water. The programme will be implemented jointly with the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and a number of NGOs. Combining emergency food assistance with development activities, it hopes to achieve sustainable improvement of water-related infrastructure.

84. In Turkey, an ambitious project took shape in 1990 for the resettlement of the Bulgarian ethnic Turks who arrived in the country as refugees in 1989. In an example of the UNDP role in aid coordination, the Turkish and United States Governments asked UNDP to manage the programme, which is financed through a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) of $10 million. The programme trains both men and women in areas where the national need is high, from construction to office skills.

C. Programme management

Conclusions of mid-term reviews

85. The conclusions of the majority of the nine Arab and European country programme mid-term reviews conducted in the region during 1990 mirrored the conclusions reached in 1989: (a) that despite considerable changes in the economic climate, country programmes have responded well to national development priorities; (b) that programme impact would be enhanced through a broader programme approach; and (c) that country programmes do not generally serve as a frame of reference for the non-United Nations donor community. A number of reviews recommended that UNDP resources focus increasingly on the environment, human development and on specific issues such as export promotion and employment relating to economic adjustment programmes.

86. Although a formal review for Portugal has not been held, it should be recalled that this is Portugal's last IPF cycle. The remainder of the programme will be geared towards strengthening cooperation with developing countries, particularly the African lusophone countries.

87. The mid-term review of the fourth regional programme for Arab States was held in October 1990 in Syria. The summary of this review is provided in a separate paper before the Governing Council at its current session. The participants at the mid-term review welcomed the role played by the regional programme in breaking new development ground in the areas of technology, environment, and women in development, and in pushing ahead with national implementation. Overall, the mid-term review exercise proved very constructive in terms of programme management and played a forward-looking role in discussing and agreeing on approaches for the preparations of the fifth programming cycle. The Bureau is following up on the recommendations, both technical and operational.

New modalities

88. Flexible modalities are being applied to a number of new projects. In Eastern Europe, the Polish umbrella project, providing consultancy services for economic reform, signed in October 1990, will serve as a model for similar projects in other countries. This project is innovative in that it combines various modalities - the United Nations International Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR), the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), United Nations volunteers and others - to achieve a rapid response to the diverse short-term advisory needs of the central administration, local government and entrepreneurs.

89. A good example of national implementation is the UNDP-sponsored project in Jordan for direct support for the administrative and technical capabilities of developmental NGOs active in poverty alleviation. The project is being executed by a national NGO - the Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund - and supports income-generation in rural and marginal urban areas.

90. Increasing use was made of new modalities in the regional programme for the Arab States. By 1990, nine projects were being executed by governments and another nine were being executed by regional institutions. Networking, a relatively new implementation modality developed in the regional programme for Europe, was by 1990 applied to the Arab regional programme for Arab States in 28 ongoing projects. The subregional approach was also increasingly used, and there was special interest in assistance to the moves to build a Maghreb common market. Meanwhile, activities continued apace in the area of Afro-Arab and Euro-Arab cooperation.

Complementarity between country and regional programmes

91. An excellent example of links between national and regional projects is UNDP assistance in the fight against the New World Screwworm (Cochliomyia hominivorax), a livestock pest in Libya, through the $1.2 million project LIB/89/002. This was followed by the regional project RAB/90/034 which sought to enlist the help of neighbouring countries in activities to monitor, quarantine and treat infestations. Given the threat to the African continent and to Europe, an FAO/International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) pledging conference was held in Rome in July 1990 with the participation of international agencies and donor countries to eradicate the New World Screwworm.

Programme delivery

92. Three major factors have affected programme delivery in 1990. First, several countries were greatly hampered by internal emergency situations that made higher delivery extremely difficult. However, the improved situation in Lebanon will help revitalize the programme, and an increased level of approvals and delivery is anticipated for 1991. Despite a continuing emergency situation in the Sudan, 1990 registered improved delivery.

93. Second, the Persian Gulf crisis has also affected programme delivery, both directly and indirectly, through the diversion of often limited national development resources, both human and financial, from development operations to short-term emergency programmes for returnees. The crisis has had a direct effect on the full implementation of the Regional Programme for Arab States, as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), responsible for the execution of 12 per cent of the programme, has had to relocate all operations.

94. Third, the evolving economic and political structures within Central and Eastern Europe have led to a delay in certain aspects of programme implementation at both the regional- and country-programme level. In spite of these factors, the Bureau estimates an IPF expenditure of $91 million in 1990, an increase of approximately 15 per cent over 1989.

IV. LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGION

A. Socio-economic context

95. Despite unprecedented economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America, social inequalities remained pronounced and during the 1980s, these were exacerbated by a precipitous decline in the flow of new loans and investments which, coupled with the falling dollar value of exports and increased interest payments, produced a huge net transfer of resources to developed countries and a sharp reduction in domestic resources for development.

96. The structural adjustment programmes adopted by most of the countries had such a high social cost that they contributed to further economic and social regression. Some countries, however, embarked on specific measures to mitigate the adverse effects of structural adjustment programmes and there was a growing trend towards more outward-looking economic policies.

97. As the region enters the 1990s, there is room for cautious optimism. It can look forward to improved prospects and a resumption of growth as long as it maintains the pace of policy reforms and harnesses its considerable resources more effectively. However, more stable terms of trade and an increase in net financial transfers are essential if the countries are to achieve sustained economic growth. The issues of high interest rates, external debt and trade in primary commodities thus remain issues of central importance.

98. The key to a strategy for durable recovery is, however, investment in human resources development, particularly investment which is cost-effective and conducive to economic and social development. In this context, the renewal of the democratic processes in the region is clearly associated with increased expectations of a more decent life. The need for human development has been recognized as an indispensable ingredient of the political dialogues now taking place in the countries.

99. The social dimensions of economic growth and the urgent need to stress national capacity-building are being handled within the frame of global themes such as environment, poverty, public sector management, women in development and transfer of technology. These are the main themes of the fifth programming cycle country and regional programmes. The fourth cycle programmes included several initiatives which in some measure anticipate the six priorities agreed to in Governing Council decision 90/34, as well as other areas such as the private sector and NGOs.

100. The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean will address these activities within the framework of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, approved by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, albeit with a reduced level of core resources made available to the region, in particular for its regional activities, which have been reduced by 50 per cent for the fifth programming cycle.

B. Programme overview

Environment and development

101. Latin America confronts accelerating rates of environmental deterioration, ecosystem destruction and the loss of plant and animal species. These problems are illustrated in the Amazon Basin and the Choco region of Colombia and Panama, which have been identified as the world's richest areas in biodiversity. This world heritage is in danger of being lost.

102. Yet, with 200 million people in the region living in poverty, the pressure of capital and interest payments on the external debt makes it difficult for Governments to invest in social infrastructure and environmental concerns. This linkage between poverty, population growth and external debt poses a complex problem. An independent commission on environment and development, sponsored with the cooperation of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), UNEP and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), has described these issues in the publication Our Own Agenda, reflecting the position and strategy of the region on this issue.

103. RBLAC is carrying out other initiatives at the regional- and country-programme level. The Amazonian Botanical Research Programme (RLA/89/026) established a data bank and maps of available plants; UNDP is also assisting in the formulation of a prefeasibility study for a water balance analysis of the Amazon Basin. In Brazil, support for the National Environment Programme (BRA/90/010) assists the Government in implementing a World Bank loan for the integrated management of national parks, biological reserves and ecological stations. In Peru, UNDP approved a project to support the Tropical Forest Plan (PER/88/007). Another project, Sugar Loaf Production (COL/90/003) is designed to reduce practices harmful to the environment while also providing special benefits for women.

Poverty

104. The magnitude of the problem has dramatically increased since the beginning of the debt crisis and the more recent implementation of the socially painful structural adjustment programmes. A 1987 regional initiative dealing with poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean (RLA/86/004) has increased the level of consciousness on this issue and through two regional conferences, the last one in Ecuador in 1990, has promoted a Social Progress Index, which complements the analytical framework contained in the UNDP Human Development Report.

105. The poverty issue receives priority attention in various country programmes. A cluster of 17 UNDP projects in Colombia supports the national strategy for the alleviation of poverty; this was started by the project Absolute Poverty and Employment Generation (COL/87/025), which assists the Government in directing the production and distribution of goods and services towards meeting the basic needs of the population. Another of the 17 cluster projects, National Plan for Rehabilitation (COL/86/018), has helped to mobilize over $1.1 billion and increased investments in the poorest areas of the country.

106. A social emergency programme was established in Peru to address the socio-economic crisis afflicting the country. The private sector, the Catholic church, local NGOs and UNDP have co-operated with the Government in implementing special measures under two projects: Social Compensation Programme (PER/88/018) and Support to the Social Emergency Programme (PER/89/012). UNDP has also played a central coordinating role for the assistance efforts promoted by the Secretary-General to overcome this social and economic crisis. In Bolivia, a social emergency fund became operational in 1987 and its principal objective has been to minimize the effects of the economic crisis through programmes to create employment and provide social assistance in areas such as health and education; it has attracted a considerable amount of additional funds. Similar funds are now in operation in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua so as to generate new income through small-scale projects on basic needs and social infrastructure. Other UNDP projects are instrumental in the establishment of mechanisms or funds to meet the most immediate development needs of the poorest population in several countries, such as Haiti and Panama.

Human rights

107. The Human Development Report 1990 asserts that human development is a process to enlarge people's choices, including political freedom, guaranteed human rights and self-respect. The democratic governments of the region assigned high priority to this issue and some addressed it in their fourth programming cycle country programmes. Noteworthy in this respect is the decision by the Government of Paraguay to establish a Centre for Human Rights, an initiative that from its inception has received strong support from UNDP.

108. In response to a growing climate of social disorder and violence, the Government of Colombia established the Presidential Office for the Defense, Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in 1987. An innovative UNDP country project, COL/87/030, provided assistance in coordinating activities with international organizations in the preparation of educational and promotion activities in the field of human rights. With the collaboration of this project, the Presidential Advisory Office actively defends the rights of children, youth, women and marginal groups through community participation and the promotion of enlightened legislation. Cases of human rights violations are now processed by the Advisory Office. The project has also facilitated the collaboration of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and of the Canadian, Netherlands and German Governments with the Presidential Advisory Office.

109. In Haiti, the role of UNDP in helping the Government to promote the widest possible participation in the 1990 elections has been critical, as well as in attracting resources from bilateral donors. UNDP supported the Electoral Council through project HAI/90/007, which assisted with the strengthening of national capacities in electoral legislation, procedures and functions.

Displaced populations, refugees and returnees

110. This issue is important not only to the democratic governments of the region but also to the developed countries and the international community in general.

General Assembly resolution 45/231 of 21 December 1990 on the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America was co-sponsored by the majority of developed countries amongst others and reflected the extent of international concern with this issue.

111. The deep economic crisis and the armed conflicts in Central America in the 1980s produced a steady flow of migrants, whose numbers by the end of 1989 were estimated at 2.2 million. The Central American Governments, as part of the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America, which UNDP is responsible for implementing, organized the International Conference on Central American Refugees to search for solutions. The strategy adopted by the Conference was to integrate the uprooted populations in their areas of settlement and to support the socio-economic development of the communities which host them.

112. A vast Programme of Assistance to Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees (PRODERE) was initiated to benefit more than 400,000 people in Central America, with an emphasis on local-level participation and with a financial pledge from the Italian Government and the subregional programme.

Alleviating structural adjustment

113. UNDP presence in Latin America and the Caribbean during the fourth programming cycle supported and complemented structural adjustment programmes implemented by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In this context, one of the leaders of the region had pointed out that economies do not adjust, people adjust. The technical cooperation programmes have therefore emphasized the mitigation of the social effects of the adjustment programmes, particularly the alleviation of their impact on the very poor. This was especially the case in the assistance provided to Jamaica and Guyana. In addition, attention was paid to the strengthening of public sector management and increasing the capacity of the private sector to attract investment.

114. In Guyana, UNDP identified a comprehensive range of priority needs for assistance in relation to the economic recovery process. Following negotiations with the World Bank and IMF, the Guyana Government agreed in 1989 to implement an economic recovery programme which allowed UNDP to initiate a series of projects for dealing with public sector initiatives through a programme approach. In Jamaica, UNDP also supported negotiations between the Government and the World Bank which lead to the first loan exclusively for the social sector. In Paraguay, the project Analysis of the Informal Sector and Support to the Small Enterprise (PAR/88/003), executed by a local NGO has included three components on credit assistance, management training and entrepreneurial advice, as well as the definition of a specific programme for women in the identified geographical zones. Finally, in Ecuador the project Participation and Management in Rural Development (ECU/89/007) is oriented towards the development of technical and financial capacity among the rural community to manage micro-projects and to coordinate work with NGOs in this sector.

Public sector management

115. Latin America's economic difficulties during the 1980s severely challenged the ability of newly elected democratic governments to meet social and economic demands. One limitation that the new leaders quickly recognized was the need for the state institutions they inherited to be more flexible and less bureaucratic to respond to these new demands.

116. UNDP has undertaken several initiatives, one being the Management Development Programme, that supports 19 governments in building the capacity to address the issues of state restructuring, decentralization and policy management. In the Eastern Caribbean, UNDP has been closely involved with the processes of economic cooperation and political unity. The first regional MDP mission in support of the public sector management requirements of a regional political grouping was launched early in 1990 in close cooperation with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). In addition, the regional project which offers support to the West Indian Commission (RLA/90/003) is providing crucial assistance in this process, which is leading to closer political cooperation.

117. At the regional level, an operational programme carried out by the Latin American Centre of Administration for Development provides technical advisory services directly to presidential offices and supports the development of courses in modern management techniques through a network of 42 public administration institutions in the region. At the country level, in Peru, a project for mass training support addresses the consolidation of the decentralization process in the administrative area; the most important achievement has been to demonstrate that a developing country has the capacity to apply innovative methodology in the field of mass rural education.

Transfer of technology

118. Technology transfers from developed countries to the developing world and the linkages between research centres and the productive sectors have been areas of particular concern for some time. The fourth country programme for Cuba supported the creation and development of the national capacity to undertake applied research. This has strengthened national research institutions through improved qualifications of human resources and research capacity, particularly in the field of agricultural diversification and improved productivity, mineral resources, biotechnology and medicine. In Chile, a concentrated effort to support the establishment of a technological capacity in the country focused on the private sector as a significant, but not exclusive, component of the productive sector. The new Government assigns priority to this sector and two major donors have joined UNDP: the European Economic Community (EEC) in the area of science and IDB in the field of technology. In Mexico, a project on technology transfer to the productive sector was aimed at strengthening the Centre for Technological Innovation at the National University of Mexico, enabling it to meet the technological demands of the productive sector. In Brazil, UNDP has assisted the National Telecommunications Research and Development Centre in absorbing state-of-the-art telecommunications technology, developing it and transferring to the private sector the knowledge to strengthen the domestic telecommunications industry which has export potential. In

Uruguay, a project for the development of basic services (PEDECIBA), helped 80 Uruguayan scientists to resettle in their home country, prepared a database of Uruguayan scientists willing to offer services to Uruguay through the TOKTEN modality and created masters and doctoral degrees in Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology and Physics at the University of Montevideo.

C. Programme management

Mid-term reviews

119. The following were the principal conclusions arising from the mid-term reviews carried out in the region:

(a) External support for the development process in Latin America is motivated by mutual interest within the concept of global interdependence. UNDP technical cooperation in the Region has been, and should continue to be, highly selective, involving substantial counterpart commitments;

(b) The country programme has served as a useful framework for the identification of technical assistance for UNDP, but to a lesser extent for the rest of the JCGP organizations and bilateral donors;

(c) As regards project implementation, the trend is to entrust increased responsibility to national counterparts without negating agency participation;

(d) In some countries, the decline of technical and managerial skills in the public sector, frequently caused by rapidly decreasing real wage earnings, constitutes an increasing challenge to examine critically the national execution modality. Specifically, greater attention is required, on a case by case basis, of the prerequisites needed to make national execution a viable modality.

Resource availability

120. UNDP resources for the region have continued to decline, in particular for regional activities. This constitutes a severe setback for initiatives with typical regional dimensions, such as the environment. The continuation of activities in the fifth programming cycle and the development of new initiatives will be affected by this decline. In consequence, the accelerating trend for UNDP programmes to rely on non-core funding, from sources such as the World Bank, IDB and other multilateral and bilateral entities, will continue.

121. This presents UNDP with both a unique opportunity and a challenge. It adds a dimension of coordination to the programmes financed through non-core funding and the implementation of these programmes testifies to the qualitative advantages which UNDP embodies.